

Survival Techniques



**Prepper's Guide to Surviving
When Disaster Strikes**

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Prepper's guide to surviving when disaster strikes

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Summary

Disasters and blackouts are often unpredictable. Science enables us to understand how a natural disaster or accident happens and shows us ways deal with them in a more effective manner. While we cannot predict a catastrophic event, we can learn how to be prepared for them in order to survive them. This eBook provides comprehensive survival skills for the following unanticipated incidents:

- 1) Earthquake
- 2) Tornados
- 3) Hurricanes
- 4) Volcanic Eruptions
- 5) Fire
- 6) Tsunamis
- 7) Electric Grid Shuts Down
- 8) Nuclear Power Plant Threat

The most important survival skill is to stay in control of your mind. In any emergency situation, do not panic or lose control. Understanding the situation quickly and acting accordingly is the best way to go. The survival skills present in this eBook are an attempt to equip you for tough situations and come out as a survivor!

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Introduction

No one can anticipate a disaster on their own. Every now and then we hear of incidents like earthquakes, fires, tsunamis, or mere blackouts, having fatal or life altering implications on several people in various parts of the planet.

Usually, there are no warnings when a catastrophic event occurs. The destruction that is left in the aftermath of a disaster can leave you helpless. You might have to evacuate your home for many days, or you may have to spend several days without basic life necessities.

The right information and level of preparedness can enable anyone to get through the hardest of circumstances and emerge as a survivor. One good thing to get started will be to find out the disaster risks for your area as to what kind of disaster might hit. This can be your first step to be prepared for any unforeseen situation and come out on top.

Technological advancements have made it possible for most of us to understand the mechanism of different kinds of disasters. However, we cannot yet predict a disaster accurately.

Once you know the potential disasters or situations that can strike in your particular area, you can devise a plan to stay prepared for any situation of emergency. If you know exactly what you need to do in an emergency, it will take away most of the distress that comes with such situations and you will be equipped to deal with it in a calm and composed manner. Staying prepared for the worst possible situation will also provide you some peace of mind in your daily life.

Usually, in the aftermath of an earthquake, tsunami, or hurricane, the survivors are considered to be very lucky. While luck has its own role in the mysteries of life and death, we cannot completely give the credit of survival stories upon luck alone.

Sure, nobody can foresee what is going to happen in their future, but it can prove to be highly beneficial to stay prepared for any possible mishap. Usually in emergencies and chaotic circumstances, people lose their decision making ability. Any normal person can get scared, distressed and confused on how to cope with the situation.

Remember, the most important element to survive any emergency is your brain. Not panicking is critical! You need to be in control of your mind and practice the survival techniques you learnt beforehand.

Suppose some unthinkable mishap happens today. Do you know what will you do immediately? You may need to leave your locality for several days or stay locked up in your home until the dust settles. Are you prepared to stay locked up in your home with no water, gas or electricity? Can you survive for an extended duration without these basic services? Yes, rescue teams might be acting fast, but in a large scale emergency condition, they may be unable to get to everyone immediately.

You can be anywhere, when an emergency situation arises: your home, your office, down at the store, or on the road. You might get worried about the wellbeing of your

loved ones. You need to find the answers to such questions to act effectively in a disaster situation.

You can find out what the potential hazards for you are from your local emergency management office or the American Red Cross Chapter in your locality. This eBook will empower you to prepare ahead for the emergency or the disaster, enabling you to cope with it effectively. Following are the general steps you can take to equip yourself to deal with any mishap:

- a) Ask yourself what kind of calamities might hit your locality and what the best ways to cope with them are. Use the information to save yourself and your loved ones from any potential danger.
- b) Find out if there is any possibility of a power outage. Keep your flashlights in a prominent and convenient place.
- c) If you go regularly to an office, club or hospital, ask them about their emergency plans.
- d) Find out what the disaster plans at your office and at the school for your child are.
- e) If you have pets, find out the care they might need in case of a disaster.

These are general guidelines for staying prepared to face any potentially alarming situation. However, different emergencies need different survival skills and coping strategies. You may set up an emergency supply kit and put it into your home and car to fight any tough circumstances. Nonetheless, it is wise to find out what the potential dangers are that may affect your area. Having a plan to face a disaster situation will help you keep your cool and cope easily with the difficult circumstances.

Earthquake

Marked by disturbances below the earth's surface causing the ground to shake, earthquakes are natural disasters that can cause bridges and buildings to collapse, and result in fires, landslides, power cut and disconnection of telephone lines. The extent of damage that an earthquake can cause can be significant, and thus appropriate survival measures become a necessity.

Before An Earthquake

Make a plan for disaster and maintain an emergency kit for all times. Conduct mock earthquake drills with your family on how to survive an earthquake. Make your home and surroundings earthquake-proof by following these steps:

- a) For furniture with heavy tops, like book cases, protect their corners inside wall studs.
- b) For reducing strain on the studs, get flexible-mount fasteners. They will also allow independent movement of furniture.
- c) Protect the refrigerator and large appliances with earthquake appliance straps.
- d) Use flexible straps made of nylon to fasten TV, Computer, Microwave, etc. so that you can easily remove and relocate them.
- e) Put latches on the doors of cabinets, specifically the ones above head level to avoid stuff falling out during tremors.
- f) Keep the glassware, heavy stuff and other breakables in lower cabinets. Only put soft art on the walls that are near sofas and beds.
- g) Get the worn out or rusted water pipes and gas pipes checked and replaced properly by a plumber.
- h) Get corrugated and flexible gas connectors made of stainless-steel instead of rigid gas connections for stoves, heaters, etc.
- i) Use metal straps to secure water heaters with walls studs.

During An Earthquake

For Indoors:

Your mantra should be “Drop, Cover & Hold On.” Always secure your head and neck beneath your arms. Hide under a table or desk. If there is no such thing nearby, drop on the floor near an interior wall. Stay away from windows, exterior walls, cabinets containing heavy stuff, huge appliances, mirrors and other hanging objects.

- a) If you are in bed, protect your head with a pillow, hold on, and stay there. Before you step out on the floor, wear your shoes for protection from debris and broken glass.
- b) If you are inside a skyscraper - Drop, Cover & Hold On. Stay away from windows. Avoid using elevators. The fire alarms and sprinkler systems might start; do not panic because of it.

For outdoors:

Try to safely move to some clear area. Do not go near buildings, trees or power lines.

- a) If you are near tall buildings, try to reach an open area when the earth starts shaking. Avoid going near windows and architectural details as they might collapse first. Always make note to seek refuge in an open area or a safe building.
- b) If you are driving, pull over safely if you can and set the parking brake. Stay away from bridges, overpasses, trees, signboards, power lines or anything that may fall over your car. Stay inside the car till the quake ends. In case a power line falls on your car, do not get out unless a rescue professional removes the danger.

After The Earthquake

Check for Damage and Hazardous Conditions

- a) **In case of a fire**, try to put it out immediately on your own. Call for help, but help might get delayed as the roads and bridges might be damaged.
- b) **If the wiring gets damaged**, turn off the main power switch. Leave it turned off until the wiring is repaired.
- c) **If Power Lines are downed**, do not touch them or let any objects come in contact with them.
- d) **Beware of Heavy Items Falling**, when you open cabinets or closets.
- e) **If you detect Gas Leaks or Broken pipes**, turn off the gas. Do not turn it back on until a professional qualified to handle such issues arrives.
- f) **Use precaution for Spilled substances**. Protect yourself with rubber gloves, safety glasses, and respiratory protection if you are cleaning up spilled substances. If you feel unsafe, leave your house until the substances are removed safely.
- g) **Beware of Damaged Walls and Chimneys** They might get weakened and can collapse in case of aftershocks. Do not use your fireplace if your chimney is damaged as it can create a carbon monoxide hazard or start a fire.

If your home is damaged-

- a) Don't go back inside your house until you are sure that it is safe.
- b) Make sure no gas leaks are there before lighting a matchstick or using electrical equipment.
- c) Get your electrical wiring and water pipes checked for faults and get the chemical spills cleaned up. If water and a faulty power line come in contact, it may cause shocks.
- d) If the light fixtures or appliances are broken or damaged, unplug them. They can cause a fire.
- e) Avoid the hazards of carbon monoxide. Avoid using gas lanterns, charcoal grills, or camp stoves indoors.

Tornados

Known as the most powerful kind of storm, tornados are a funnel shaped, rotating cloud, and are an extension of a thunderstorm. The whirling winds can reach up to 300 miles/hour. The damage trail of a tornado can be anywhere from a single mile to 50.

Learn How to Spot a Tornado

Determining ways to identify a tornado and knowing when they might strike is important.

- a) A tornado may happen at any time of the year
- b) Until a tornado picks up debris or dust, it may appear transparent
- c) Usually, tornadoes can be identified by looking out for these signs-
 - Dark sky often taking a greenish hue
 - Large hail
 - One large dark cloud lying low
 - A very loud roar, resembling the noise a freight train makes

Before A Tornado

A direct hit from a severe tornado can destroy any house. Only the houses that are located in the periphery of the path of a tornado can withstand the severity if they are hardened against it enough. You should prepare your family by providing them with concrete information on what to do if a tornado strikes:

- a) Designate a spot where everyone should meet if there is an emergency. Designate a person to be in charge of bringing different essentials.
- b) Show the main shut-off points of water, gas and electricity to all the adult and young adult family members and guide them how to turn them off.
- c) Keep your first aid kit well stocked; store ample batteries and flashlights.
- d) Invest in impact-resistant windows.
- e) All your doors must have at least 3 hinges, and the doors that are dead bolted should have at least an inch long bolt.
- f) The covering of your roof and the sheathing beneath it should be able to endure high winds.
- g) Affix permanent stiffeners made of metal or wood to the door of your garage.
- h) Replace the landscaping consisting of rock and gravel, with shredded bark or mulch; these will cause less damage in case of high winds.
- i) Trim down the trees and bushes. Cut down the dead or weak branches that could fall out and damage your home or locality.

During A Tornado

If the signs of a tornado are visible in your locality:

- a) Stay tuned with radio and TV transmission to remain updated on the announcements and instructions for the tornado.
- b) Shut off the water, gas, and electricity.
- c) If there is furniture and grills outdoors, move them inside if possible. They are potentially deadly if they start flying.
- d) If there is no announcement made about a public shelter, take your family to a basement, hallway or any room away from windows.
- e) Keep your windows sealed to keep the rain and wind outside.
- f) Give every family member a flash light.
- g) Keep a portable radio that runs on batteries, and keep listening to the broadcasts.
- h) If you live in a mobile home, seek shelter somewhere else for the duration of the tornado.
- i) If you are driving or are in a vehicle, get out of it and seek refuge in a strong building or a ditch.
- j) Do not go under a bridge or overpass for shelter; tornadoes can destroy such structures.

After A Tornado

If you had to evacuate your home, or if your home got heavily damaged by the tornado, do not re-enter until the authorities give you the go-ahead. After that:

- a) Before going in, figure out the extent of structural damage.
- b) Do not use matches or any other form of open flame; it may start a fire in case there is a gas leakage. Use flashlights instead.
- c) Find out whether the water is safe to drink through radio broadcast.
- d) Before turning the power back on, be sure that an electrician has inspected the electrical system.
- e) Gather your documents of insurance policy and take an inventory of your belongings that were damaged to prepare a damage claim.
- f) Collect the evidence of damages by taking pictures, and file your claim to your insurance company.

Hurricanes

Hurricanes are tropical storms which can cause high winds, heavy rains and storms coupled with flooding which can last for 2 or more weeks. Power and electricity may be unavailable for days during and after a hurricane. The roads might get blocked due to water and debris which means rescue teams may not be able to reach the victims for several days. Staying fully prepared to face such circumstances is very important in this regard.

Before A Hurricane

1. "Watches" are different from "Warnings."
 - a) For a specified area, a watch means the weather conditions indicate that a hurricane is possible within 48 hours. Be on guard.
 - b) For a specified area, a warning means that a hurricane is expected within 36 hours. It needs immediate action.

Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Scale			
Scale Number (Category)	Sustained Winds (MPH)	Damage	Storm Surge
1	74-95	Minimal: Untied mobile homes, vegetation and signs.	4-5 feet
2	96-110	Moderate: All mobile homes, roofs, small crafts, flooding.	6-8 feet
3	111-130	Extensive: Small buildings, low-lying roads cut off.	9-12 feet
4	131-155	Extreme: Roofs destroyed, trees down, roads cut off, mobile homes destroyed. Beach homes flooded.	13-18 feet
5	>155	Catastrophic: Most buildings destroyed. Vegetation destroyed. Major roads cut off. Homes flooded.	>18 feet

2. Stay updated on weather forecasts via TV or Radio. Invest in a NOAA Weather Radio that runs on batteries. Also, keep another commercial radio powered by batteries to stay in touch with information other than weather reports.
3. Learn the evacuation plans for your neighborhood, from the local office for emergency management. Know the routes for evacuation. Keep in mind a place where you will go in case of evacuation and how will you reach there. At times you might need alternate routes.
4. Talk about hurricane preparedness at your home. Make a disaster plan for a proactive approach. Decide on a place where you can meet, away from your home in case you get separated.
5. Agree on one contact who lives out of town and whom everyone in your home will call to inform that they are safe.
6. If one of your family member stays away from home but may need help in case of a hurricane, think of their needs. Take care of your neighbors' special needs, especially disabled people or the visually impaired.
7. Be prepared to survive with no help for at least 3 days. Stock your disaster supply kit accordingly. Store food and drinking water in stock.
8. Secure your home by investing in permanent hurricane shutters.

9. Show the main shut-off points of water, gas and electricity to all the adult and young adult family members and guide them how to turn them off.
10. Make sure that your home conforms to all the building codes. Roofs not built in specification with building codes are highly vulnerable to hurricanes. You can decrease the risk by using additional clips or straps to fasten the roof to the structure.
11. Trim down the trees and bushes and cut down the dead or weak branches that could fall out and damage your home or locality.
12. Make sure that the rain gutters and downspouts are clear of any clogs.
13. Get a flood insurance policy. Get it early as usually the waiting period for flood insurance is 30 days.
14. Keep a record of your valuable belongings. It is wise to keep photographic or video evidence of your valuables and keep that evidence in a safe place.

During A Hurricane Threat

1. If a hurricane watch has been issued, be prepared to face a hurricane within 24 to 36 hours.
2. Close the hurricane shutters. Bring inside the outdoor furniture.
3. Stock up on food and water for several days.
4. In case of evacuation, take your disaster supply kit with you.
5. Evacuate immediately if you live in a mobile home, high rise building, or near the coast.
6. Listen to local news to hear if authorities have ordered an evacuation.
7. When authorities order an evacuation:
 - a) Leave quickly.
 - b) Take the evacuation routes announced by local authorities.
 - c) Avoid going near riverbanks, streams and coastal areas.
 - d) Inform others where you are headed.
8. If you are not asked to or are unable to leave your home, stay indoors when the hurricane hits. Keep away from windows and glass doors. Close the curtains and blinds. Do not be fooled by the lull if it gets calm, it may pick up again.
 - a) Shut down utilities if such an announcement is issued by the authorities.
 - b) If not instructed to turn off, set the refrigerator on coldest and keep it closed.
 - c) Shut off the propane tanks.
9. If there are strong winds:
 - a) Seek shelter in a small interior room or hallway away from windows.
 - b) Close all the doors inside the house. Lock up the external doors too.
 - c) In a double-story home, move to an interior room on the 1st floor.
 - d) In a multi-story house, move to the first or second floors and stay in interior rooms away from windows.
 - e) Lie down under a table or a strong object. Do not use the phone except for grave emergencies. Local authorities require the telephone lines on first priority.

After a Hurricane

1. If you are at a safe location, stay there unless the authorities deem it safe to leave. Do not go back to your locality if you evacuated, unless authorities tell you that you can return safely.
2. Keep listening to radio or TV to get updates on your locality, how to get financial aid and medical help, etc.
3. Do not drive unless absolutely necessary. Roads may be weak and filled with debris. Avoid driving in flooded areas and closed roads at all costs.
4. Do not use tap water for drinking and cooking unless the authorities notify the public that it is safe to consume.
5. Keep in mind the health and safety of your family. Stress and fatigue might appear in the aftermath of the disaster. If the problem persists, seek crisis counseling.
6. Explain to your children about the disaster and help them recover. Keep the needs of your neighbors in mind. Hurricanes often isolate people, stay in touch to avoid difficult circumstances.
7. Avoid going to flooded/damaged areas unless authorities ask you to volunteer. In case you are volunteering, take your own food, water, and sleeping gear.
8. Keep yourself, your family and the children away from water. Even 6 inch deep water can cause you to lose your balance and drown/injure you.
9. Keep your distance from broken power lines. Ask the authorities to take care of broken water/sewage pipes and gas connections.
10. Use flashlights instead of candles or any other open flame.
11. Don't use candles or other open flames indoors. Use a flashlight to inspect damage.
12. Gather your documents of insurance policy and take an inventory of your belongings that were damaged to prepare a damage claim.
13. Collect the evidence of damages by taking pictures, gather the documents and file your claim to your insurance company.

Volcanic Eruptions

There are many types of volcanic eruption. It can be just trickles of lava or it can be violent explosions shooting rock, gas and ashes high up in the air. The violent ones can be highly destructive, as much as a nuclear weapon strike. Luckily, science has enabled us to consistently monitor most of the volcanoes and we can get warning before a catastrophic eruption. However, if your residence is near a volcano, or if you go on a trip to visit a volcano, you always have that risk of facing an eruption. So it is recommended that you know the following preparedness guidelines:

Before An Eruption

1. Decide on an evacuation procedure. Plan to leave from various alternate routes, in case of emergency.
2. Make a disaster plan for your house. If you are separated during the occurrence of an eruption, make a plan on how will you get back together; designate a meeting spot for this purpose.
3. Agree on an out of town contact to call in case of emergency to notify of your safety.
4. Stock up a disaster supply kit and keep it handy.
5. Keep goggles and breath-masks for every member of your family to withstand ash-fall
6. Never go to an active volcano site unless there is a safe area for viewing designated by the officials.

During An Eruption

1. If you are near the volcano, immediately evacuate. Move away from the lava, debris and ashes.
2. Do not go to downwind areas as ash-fall might constrict your breathing.
3. Prefer to go towards areas with higher grounds. Avoid valleys that are near a river and other areas that lie low. This is to stay safe from mudflows.
4. Remain indoors till the dust settles. Do not leave unless you fear that the roof may fall.
5. Close all the doors, windows, ducts, chimneys and other ventilation channels in case of ash-fall.
6. Do not drive in heavy dust unless it is unavoidable. If you do drive in dust, keep your speed below 35 mph.
7. Wipe away the heavy ash that sets on roofs and drainage lines.
8. Ash from volcanoes is actually glass pieces, which is dangerous for eyes, breathing and open injuries. Stay safe from ash by:
 - a) Wearing full-sleeves dresses and long pants.
 - b) Wearing goggles
 - c) Wearing dust mask
9. Turn off the engines of your vehicle. Volcanic ash gets stirred up due to driving. It can clog the engines and cause damage to various parts of the vehicle.

After The Eruption

1. Try to not go to the areas where there is ash fall. Cover your mouth if you already are in such an area. Keep your skin and eyes protected by wearing goggles and covered clothes.
2. Remove ash fall from your roof. Ash fall is pretty heavy and it can make your roof collapse. Be very careful when you clean your roof of ash fall.
3. Do not drive in areas where there is ash fall. It can clog your engine if it gets stirred.
4. If you suffer from breathing problems, avoid ash fall as much as you can. Do not go outdoors until the authorities give the go-ahead.

Fire

Every year fire outbreaks cause the deaths of over 4000 US citizens and thousands more end up injured/disabled. Fire outbreaks are preventable. Yet, each year, fires cause around 8.6 billion dollars worth of damages to property.

With a little preparedness and appropriate knowledge beforehand, you can prevent fires and deal with them in a safer manner.

Before A Fire

1. Get smoke alarms installed in your building. Having smoke alarms that work properly, reduces the chances of deadly fires by 50%.
 - a) Put smoke alarms at all location in your house. Inside rooms, hallways, stairways and near but not inside the kitchen.
 - b) Check and clean the smoke alarm once every month. Change their batteries once every year at least. Change the alarms every 10 years.
2. Make an emergency exit plan for every room in your house. Practice emergency and fire exit drills for every room of your house with your family.
 - a) Be sure that your windows are not shut for good and can be opened from inside, in case of emergency.
 - b) If your house is double or multi-story, keep ladders to escape easily. Make sure that your anti-theft system that blocks entry from outside, can be opened easily from inside.
 - c) Train your family members to lie low on the floor when exiting from a fire as lower air is safer during fires.
 - d) Decide a place outside your home where you all can meet after you escape a fire.
3. Keep your store rooms free of trash. Do not let magazines and newspapers pile up.
4. Get your electrical wiring checked.
 - a) Get the exposed or frayed wires & the loose plugs fixed.
 - b) Your wiring should not run across high traffic areas, over nails or under rugs.
 - c) Make sure your outlets and extension wires are not overloaded. For plugging more than 2 appliances, get safety approved units that have circuit breakers built-in, which prevents short circuits and sparks.
 - d) Keep the electrical wiring away from home insulation.
5. Avoid using flammable liquids indoors, such as, gasoline, naphtha or benzene.
 - a) Keep flammable liquids stored in approved containers at a place that has good ventilation.
 - b) Avoid smoking near flammable liquids.
 - c) If you soak anything in flammable liquids, discard it safely after use.
6. Keep the sources of heat in order. Too many fires start because of faulty stoves or furnaces, and creosote build-up in chimneys. Get them checked each year by a certified professional.
7. Get the chimneys insulated and put spark arresters on the top. Your chimney should go at least 3 feet above your roof. Also trim down and remove branches near the chimney.
8. Exercise caution when you use unconventional heating sources like coal, wood, electrical space heaters and kerosene heaters.

- a) See if kerosene heaters are legal in your locality. Fill kerosene heaters only when they are cooled and do the filling outdoors.
 - b) Keep heaters at a distance of 3 feet at minimum from flammable stuff. Your rooms should be insulated properly too.
 - c) For any heating source, use only the designated fuel and properly follow the instructions by the manufacturer.
 - d) Save your walls, drapes, furniture and other flammables from open flames.
 - e) Use portable heaters only if your room has good ventilation.
9. Keep lighters and matches out of reach of children.
 10. Avoid smoking in bed, or when you're sleepy. Use deep and strong ashtrays. After smoking douse the cigarette or cigar remains with water before disposing.
 11. Close your bedroom doors when you sleep.
 12. Know and inform everyone in the house about the shut-off points for gas and electricity.
 13. Get A-B-C type fire extinguishers for your house and learn their usage along with other family members.
 14. Install a fire sprinkler system in your house.
 15. Get your house inspected for fire prevention and safety by the local fire department.
 16. Educate your kids on how to report a fire and how to call 911.
 17. Keep an inventory record of your valuables and store it in another location. This will help you claim the insurance money in the event of a fire.

During A Fire

1. Put out small fires by water or fire extinguisher. If the fire starts getting out of control, stop trying to put it out. If you are unable to control it, evacuate the place along with everyone else and call the fire department.
2. Do not try to extinguish an electrical fire by water. They can only be put out by fire extinguishers specially made for electrical fires.
3. Small kitchen fires caused by oil or grease, can be smothered by salt or baking soda or you can cover the flame with a lid.
4. If a fire catches your dress, stop, drop, and roll on the floor till the fire gets extinguished. Do not run as it will only fan the fire.
5. To escape a fire from a closed door, feel the temperature of the door's top, the doorknob and the door crack with the back of your hand before you open it. Do not use your palm or fingers to test the heat as it can damage your hand's grasping ability which will make it difficult for you to escape.
 - a) If you feel a door is cool, slowly open it to check if there is any smoke or fire in your way to escape. If the way is clear leave quickly, you may need to crawl as air is clearer near the ground during fires. If the way is blocked, close the door quickly and find another way out, like a window.
 - b) If the door is hot, don't open it. Use a window to exit. If you are unable to escape, hang a white or light colored cloth from the window to alert the fire fighters to rescue you.
6. Shut the doors after getting out of a room to delay the fire's spreading.
7. Dial 911. After getting out safely.

After A Fire

1. Cool down and cover the burns to decrease the chances of injuries worsening. Give first aid to the ones who need it.
2. Don't re-enter a building affected by fire unless authorities give you the go-ahead.
3. Get the wiring checked by an electrician before you start using it again.
4. Watch out for structural damage, especially in roofs and floors.
5. If you need another place to live, or food or shelter, contact Salvation Army or the American Red Cross.
6. Contact your insurance company. Take a list of damaged items to them along with photographic proofs. Also, maintain the record of repair charges and clean up charges, for both insurance and tax filing.
7. If you live on rent, contact the landlord. They will be responsible to avoid further loss to the property.
8. Discard the edibles that are exposed to fire and its affects.
9. Do not open safes or strong boxes. They hold heat for many hours, if you open them before they have cooled, their content might burst into flames.

Tsunamis

A Tsunami is marked by enormous waves in the ocean caused by some disturbance (usually an earthquake) in the land beneath the ocean. After a severe earthquake, a tsunami can affect the areas near the coastline within a matter of minutes. It can happen in any season, in the day or during the night.

Before A Tsunami

1. Understand the terms used by warning centers.
 - a) Advisory – The occurrence of an earthquake in the ocean that may cause a tsunami.
 - b) Watch – Tsunami might have been generated but is 2 hours or more away from the area of the Watch.
 - c) Warning – Tsunami has been generated and can cause great damage, so evacuate immediately.
2. Keep listening to TV or radio to get information and instruction from local authorities.
3. If you notice a downturn in water far from the shoreline, consider it the nature's warning for a tsunami and move immediately inland towards higher ground.
4. If you observe an earthquake in a coastal locality, tune in to the radio to check for a tsunami warning.
5. Do not underestimate a small tsunami, as it can be accompanied by giant waves at a distance of a few miles.
6. Be prepared to evacuate at any given time. Follow the instructions discussed in the hurricanes and tornados section for evacuation preparation.

During A Tsunami

1. Evacuate immediately if the authorities advise so.
2. Do not go back until the authorities advise you to do so. Know that a tsunami may be followed by aftershocks and can result in deadly consequences.
3. Avoid going to the beach to just watch the tsunami waves. If you can see the waves, it may be too late to escape from them.

After A Tsunami

1. Do not go to flooded areas until authorities consider it safe to go back.
2. Beware of debris in the water; it can harm people and boats.
3. Contact local authorities if you need aid in the form of food, shelter, or clothing for recovering from the disaster.

Electric Grid Shuts Down

Nothing is perfect and such is the case with the power grid system in our developed nation. There can be many circumstances that may result in a power outage. Here are a few steps you should take to be ready to combat any such situation:

1. Keep stock of food that can be consumed with little or no cooking. It can include canned meat, peanut butter, cold cereals, canned veggies and fruits, instant coffee, etc.
2. Also keep an alternate source of cooking like a fire pit, or camp stove.
3. Keep flashlights and batteries stocked up for emergency situations.
4. Keep the fuel for the energy device that you are keeping for emergency. It can be wood to consume in a fire pit, or gas cylinder or charcoal, etc. You will need it in case of emergency and usually won't be able to buy it during a severe power outage. Also, store the fuel with caution to avoid starting a dangerous fire.
5. Keep blankets, sleeping bags or a comforter to keep you warm when there will be no heat generated by electricity.
6. Consider buying a generator. Get it installed, test it and then keep running it once every month to keep it in running condition.
7. If your locality gets proper sunlight, consider investing in solar power panels. Many states and the federal government provide financial incentives to encourage renewable energy usage.
8. Fill up empty containers and jugs with water and keep them in the freezer. It will turn the water into ice. In a power outage, ice will help keep the contents of your freezer cool for longer periods of time. You can also move some frozen containers to your refrigerator to increase its cooling for some time during the power outage.

Note: When the frozen water thaws, you can use it only for cleaning purposes and not for drinking unless you purify/filter/boil/disinfect/distill it.

Nuclear Power Plant Threats

Most states have their own nuclear power plants. 20% of the power in the US comes from them and almost 3 million US citizens reside within a 10-mile radius of nuclear power plants.

While nuclear power plants are constructed under the strict supervision of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), you can still anticipate accidents. They can cause radiation which is a great risk for the safety and health of the nearby public.

Before A Nuclear Power Plant Emergency

1. Develop your understanding of the terms describing a nuclear emergency:
 - a) Notification of Unusual Event: A small problem that means no radiation has leaked.
 - b) Alert: A small problem with little radiation that is contained within the power plant.
 - c) Site Area Emergency: A serious problem with little amounts of radiation that may affect public.
 - d) General Emergency: Most serious problem with harmful radiation posing danger to public lives.
2. Educate yourself about the warning system of your community. There may be sirens and flash warning systems covering the 10-mile radius around the nuclear power plant.
3. Every power company is legally bound to give information material for public emergency each year to nearby residents. Be sure to obtain your copy.
4. Find out the emergency plans for the schools, hospitals, supermarkets and places where you visit routinely. Find out where to seek shelter in case of emergency. Keep updated with your local TV and radio.
5. Stay ready to evacuate at any given time. Keep an emergency kit for evacuation. Keep in mind what mode of transport you will use to evacuate.

During A Nuclear Power Plant Emergency

1. Pay close attention to the warning. Every accident in a power plant doesn't necessarily emit radiations. The damage might be contained and there may be no danger to the general public.
2. Keep updated with local TV and radio. Give priority to local instructions over the guidelines in this eBook.
3. If the authorities ask you to evacuate, leave immediately. Shut the doors and the windows of the home. Close the windows and vents of your car. Keep listening to the radio to get further instructions and routes to evacuate.
4. Stay indoors if the authorities do not advise to evacuate. Keep the doors and windows closed. Shut off any A/C, vent fans, furnace, or any other way of exchanging air with the outside. Move to the basement or any underground area if you can. Keep a portable radio with you.
5. If time allows, bring your animals to a safe place.
6. If you think you may have been exposed, thoroughly bathe yourself. Change your dress and footwear. Place the exposed dress in a bag of plastic, seal it and discard it.
7. Keep the food in containers that are covered, or in the refrigerator. If some food was not covered previously, wash it thoroughly before storing it.

After A Nuclear Power Plant Emergency

1. In case you have evacuated, do not go back until authorities consider it safe.
2. If you are told to stay indoors, don't step out unless authorities consider it safe.
3. If you experience nausea or other unusual symptoms, consult a doctor as this may be due to exposure to radiation.

Conclusion

Hundreds of thousands of lives are disrupted by disasters each year. Apart from billions of dollars worth of damage, disasters result in many killings, seriously injured people and lifelong trauma. Being prepared is highly advisable to cope with the deadly impact of the disaster, maintain a semblance of normalcy, and work towards recovery. Preparedness reduces the fear, stress and the potential losses that a disaster can cause.

One would do well to know what to do if a fire arises, or where to go if you have to evacuate, and how to give first aid in an emergency situation. The potential hazards of disasters can also be minimized by flood proofing, or securing the stuff that can get loose and become a threat in the occurrence of an earthquake, tornado etc.

You should find out what the potential situations that could occur in your area are and stay ready to be self-sufficient for a of minimum 3 days in terms of food, shelter, water and medical needs. Not panicking is the key to getting in control of any emergency situation.